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¹⁴⁸ Education funding proposals lagging in legislature

BY JAKE CROUSE
Morning News
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FLORENCE — Gov. Nikki Haley laid out some specific policy ideas in her State of the State address in January to aid student success in rural and often impoverished school districts throughout the state. Many of these ideas, however, have yet to be considered or legislated on this session.

Most notably, a proposal that would allow a \$200 million-a-year borrowing plan will die in the legislature this session, according to state senators last week. Schools that chose to use the fund would have to repay the loan, but no clear specifics were given for that time window.

Though her intention was good with this point, says Chesterfield County Superintendent Harrison Goodwin, that program would do little to build new facilities

or carry out significant revamping. His previous experience before leading school districts was in school facility construction, so he did some calculations to make his point.

“School construction right now is going between \$150-\$165 per square foot,” he said. “You could build 1,212,000 square feet

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(with the \$200 million-a-year plan). For a school the size of Cheraw High School, you could rebuild eight schools, and that's not much considering the number of schools in the state."

Florence County 5 Superintendent Randy Smiley wonders how rural and often impoverished school districts that Haley aims to help could even afford to accept the borrowed money.

"While developing a \$200 million borrowing program for school districts sounds good, it will only work if those districts can afford to pay the money back once the funds are allocated," he said. "For most of the Abbeville districts, the millage rates are very low, requiring a large tax increase to generate funds for debt service."

Goodwin gave a more specific scenario to illustrate the same point.

"A million (dollars of taxes) in Chesterfield County for facilities would raise about \$200,000. A million in Marion County probably does not raise \$80,000," he said. "Many people are already poor, so how are you going to tax them two and a half times more (to pay back the loan)?"

Goodwin points to another issue that Haley addressed in her proposals, one that he says is more vital to good education than facilities: teacher quality and retention.

One measure Haley suggested would have provided a \$15 million fund to recruit teachers to serve in rural school districts that have a high rate of turnover. The program would pay back \$7,500 in student loans if a new graduate in education were to teach in a district with a teacher turnover rate averaging 12 percent or higher over the past five years.

According to data put out by the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement, 25 school districts meet or exceed the 12 percent rate of teacher turnover, with single-year rates as high as 33.8 percent in some districts.

Some districts offer the loan-forgiveness plans if new education graduates

sign up to teach in their district, and similar plans have been used by the state Department of Education in the past decade.

Another solution proposed by Haley would fund 10,000 remote "hot spots" that would provide Internet access in homes of impoverished students so that they could advance their studies while at home or while on the bus, depending on transportation time. That issue has yet to reach legislative consideration.

The conversation about funding for rural school district revitalization stemmed from a court ruling in 2014. The case, *Abbeville v. State of South Carolina*, was first heard in 1993 and included every school district in the Pee Dee region except Darlington County among a 40-district list of plaintiffs.

After nearly two decades of deliberations and rehearings, the 2014 decision handed down by the S.C. Supreme Court found that the state had not provided the opportunity for a "minimally adequate education" implicit in its Code of Laws. The court charged the General Assembly to come up with a system to address the issue by November 2015, but eventually gave in to time concerns from legislators and pushed emphasis toward the end of the 2016 legislative period, which ends in June.

A number of bills have been working their way through the General Assembly this year to address some issues in rural district education. One bill signed by Haley on May 23 created an Office of Transformation that specialized in solutions for these districts. Another currently moving past its third rehearing would have the State Department of Education develop a system for providing assistance by the end of the calendar year, and run a professional development efficiency study that would allow districts information to see where they need more or less resources devoted.

Smiley, however, says that constant bypassing of and stalling on legislation, even those bills that may not work in his opinion, are taking the hardest toll on the future of South Carolina.

"Districts such as ours should not have to continue to wait till the legislature gets around to funding our most precious asset — our children," he said.



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148 'Conservative' doesn't really mean much anymore

You don't see political yard signs in South Carolina that say, "Vote John Smith, liberal." All over the state, however, it is common for candidates to tout they are "conservative."

In today's media-saturated world of buzzwords, does the word "conservative" actually mean anything? Hasn't the word lost its meaning, just like the words "liberal" or "progressive" are relatively simplistic frames of reference that do little to outline a candidate's full perspective?

"The word 'conservative' now causes some people to wince, because they think they're being perceived as (state Sen.) Lee Bright rather than (President) George H.W. Bush," Upstate political analyst Chip Felkel said.

You might be surprised to know the actual dictionary definition of "conservative." It's an adjective that describes a person "disposed to preserving existing conditions, institutions, etc., or to restore traditional ones, and to limit change." A companion definition is one who is "cautiously moderate."

In other words, "conservative" generally is accepted as "resistance to change," according to College of Charleston political science professor Gibbs Knott.

So let's look at how serious South Carolina's conservatives were about opposing change this year:

They voted for \$40 million more for farmers hammered by flooding.

They voted to borrow \$2 billion to pay for much-needed road improvements by obligating the state for years to spend \$200 million annually of existing tax revenue. They dumped jumping at something that was all the rage in conservative circles in years past – a "user



Andy Brack
Statehouse Report

fee" of an increased gas taxes paid, in part, by visitors.

They voted to ban abortions after 19 weeks – a huge change from the constitutional standard on abortion.

On the national front, self-proclaimed conservatives want to change immigration laws and trade agreements. They want activist judges who will change Supreme Court precedents. And they want to create wholesale change by eliminating some government agencies.

All of this zeal for change doesn't sound too "conservative." Of course, there's also something to be said that with a whole lot of nothing going on in Washington, the do-nothing GOP-led Congress really has some credibility about being "conservative," although many think they mostly waste time.

Knott suggests the word "conservative" doesn't have as much of a punch any more other than being a synonym for "Republican," as the label "liberal" is often trotted out to describe all Democrats.

"I also think the rise of hyper-partisan media has continued to keep words like 'conservative' and 'liberal' alive," he said. "So yes, I think the word still has meaning in 2016. But it is much more connected to partisanship (conservative equals Republican, liberal equals Democrat) than ever before."

University of South Carolina political science professor Mark Tompkins had similar thoughts.

"It seems to me that many on

the right have succumbed to a tribal impulse – our folks and their folks," he said. "This impulse leads to a variety of policy positions and legislative and regulatory actions that abandon 'conservative principles.'"

Felkel added that "conservative" meant a broad range of things today, which leads to adjectives to explain what kind of Republican they might be: tea party conservative, evangelical conservative or country club conservative.

"Does it mean 'fiscal conservative' or 'social conservative'?" Or is it a mix of both?" he asked. "In our own state, we see how you tend to have more fiscal conservatives and social moderates (in the Republican Party) on the coast, where in the Upstate there are more social and fiscal conservatives."

He added, "Unfortunately, there's so much controversy within the GOP on what that term means – and disagreement over what is required to meet the criteria or even what is that criteria – that it has lost its punch."

All in all, it seems the red GOP tent is packed with "conservatives" of various stripes, from the bombastic, fire-breathing Bright of Spartanburg to Gov. Nikki Haley to thoughtful senators like those targeted by Haley in the coming June primary.

Nevertheless, it's important to know the big red tent is also pretty white. It's not very brown or black because the state's minorities don't seem to feel comfortable inside. Maybe that's because they're not sure exactly what a "conservative" is, but they don't like what they see now.

Andy Brack is editor and publisher of Statehouse Report. He can be reached at brack@statehousereport.com.



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SC Gov. Nikki Haley to Speak at Inaugural Graduation for POST Challenge Program

(May 25, 2016, Aiken, SC) South Carolina Gov. Nikki R. Haley will be the guest speaker at the inaugural graduation for the POST Challenge program on Friday, May 27. The graduation will be held at 2 p.m. at Aiken Technical College in the Gregg-Graniteville Student Activities Center gymnasium.

The POST Challenge program is a collaborative effort between the South Carolina Army National Guard, Aiken Technical College, Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute Camp Long facility, the Aiken County Public School District, and the Lower Savannah Council of Governments' Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The program was created due to the award of a nearly \$4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to create a 20-week extension to the South Carolina Army National Guard's Youth Challenge Academy based at McCrady Training Center in Eastover, S.C. The program, which began in January, will serve six cohorts of students over the next three years.

"These young people have already completed Youth Challenge, a 22-week quasi-military program which follows an intervention model of eight core components to improve their life skills and enhance the holistic growth of the cadets," said Larry Snipes, Director of the POST Challenge program. "Department of Labor's Job Challenge, called POST Challenge in South Carolina, is a pilot program that expands and enhances the National Guard Youth

Challenge program's job skills component."

Cadets selected for the POST Challenge program have an opportunity to earn applied science certificates from Aiken Technical College during the 20-week session in high-demand fields such as welding, basic tower and wireless installation, production technology, computer technology, and patient care assisting.

In addition to receiving a college credential, cadets will also be recognized at graduation for other credentials received during the course of the program such as WorkKeys and GED credentials.

"We are very proud of these cadets

and their growth over the past few months. The POST Challenge program is a unique opportunity to provide cadets, who come from around the state, with skills that are in high-demand among our state's employers," said Aiken Technical College President Dr. Susan A. Winsor. "We are proud to partner with the South Carolina Army National Guard and our other partners in providing educational opportunities that set the stage for future success." Gov. Haley will be joined by a number of special guests for this momentous occasion including her husband, Capt. Michael Haley; South Carolina Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Robert E. Livingston Jr.; South Carolina Assistant Adjutant General-Army Brig. Gen. R. Van McCarty; Ernie Gonzales, Director of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Jennifer Troke, Director of Youth Services with the U.S. Department of Labor; Col. Jackie Fogle, Director of the South Carolina Youth Challenge Academy; and a number of state and local elected officials.

A reception for graduating cadets and their families will follow the graduation ceremony.



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House Passes Partial Road Funding Bill - *Amends legislation to include DOT reform*

Columbia, SC) – House Speaker Jay Lucas (District 65-Darlington) issued the following statement after the House amended S. 1258, a bill that allocates through bonding and other means over \$4 billion for interstate needs, road resurfacing, and bridge repair over the next ten years. Today's House passage of S. 1258 provides another opportunity for a road funding bill (although partial) to be signed into law by Governor Haley before the end of the legislative session.

"Members of the House understand that the people of South Carolina expect their Legislature to pass a roads bill this year. Although more effort must be made next session to find a long-term funding stream, this bill is a starting point that allows for adequate repair of deficient roads and bridges without raiding our state's General Fund," Speaker Lucas stated.

The Senate version of S. 1258 only provided for bonding/funding and did not address DOT reform. The Ways and Means Committee successfully amended the bill prior to debate on the House floor to include DOT reform, which gives (1) the Governor the ability to appoint all Highway Commissioners, and (2) the Highway

Commission the authority to appoint a Department of Transportation Secretary with the advice and consent of the General Assembly.

"DOT reform is a crucial piece to the road funding puzzle. The General Assembly should not give another penny to the Department of Transportation without certain accountability requirements in place to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. I am very pleased the House successfully amended the Senate version to include governance restructuring as an effort to promote efficiency within DOT," Speaker Lucas concluded.

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148 Governor backs Boyd, criticizes Goldfinch

By MAX HREND
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While most of Gov. Nikki Haley's appearance in Georgetown was spent discussing state business, after it concluded, she delivered harsh criticism toward a local state representative.

"I endorsed him because he was a freshman coming in," Haley said, "but I've never been more disappointed in a legislator than in Stephen Goldfinch."

Haley made her statement after appearing at a Rotary Club of Georgetown Lunch event at Chacon's of Georgetown Tuesday, May 31, and hours before she was scheduled to appear at a campaign event for Reese Boyd III. Boyd, a Murrells Inlet resident and Myrtle Beach attorney, and Goldfinch, who Haley represents District 108

— which includes Georgetown and Horry counties — in the state House of Representatives, are both seeking the District 34 state Senate seat that will be vacated when sitting Sen. Ray Cleary finishes out his term.

Boyd and Goldfinch, along with contractor Joe Ford and businessman Dick Withington, are all seeking the Republican nomination for the Senate seat. With no other challengers from any other political party on the ballot, the June 14 primary will, in all likelihood, determine who will

succeed Cleary in the Senate.

After speaking to Rotarians Tuesday, Haley made her preference known.

"I am looking forward to seeing Reese Boyd," Haley said. "I think he will be a fantastic legislator who will make some changes."

Boyd, who also attended Tuesday's lunch, said he was "thrilled" to have Haley's support, while adding he saw it as a positive indication of his campaign efforts.

"We're very thrilled to have the governor's support," Boyd said. "Her appearance at the event tonight is another indication of how the momentum is picking up. We're very happy with where we are."

While praising Boyd, Haley chided Goldfinch for what she called "terrible votes" that ran contrary to her conservative agenda.

"You've got one incumbent House member who is running who has made terrible votes, from tax increases to increasing his pay by 53 percent to even overruling my workplace initiatives," she said. "Anything that we have wanted, he sided with leadership and Democrats of the old guard."

Her statements came less than two years after Haley stumped for Goldfinch at a Sept. 25, 2014, Republican rally in Pawleys Island, before he was elected to his second term in the House. During that event, she said, "I need a representative that is going to fight for the people he represents, not fight for the establishment in Columbia."

Goldfinch contended Haley supported him in 2014 even though the votes she called into question were cast before that election. He added, however, he was disappointed to be chastised by someone whom he has supported.

"Here's why it hurts — we're not on opposite ends of the political spectrum," Goldfinch said. "This is 100 percent a personality difference. I believe — and, quite frankly, most people who know her and are in Columbia believe — she is running the state on emotions, rather than with business sense. This is an emotional re-

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Haley backs Boyd

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action to a personality difference. ... Policy-wise, the governor and I agree 99 percent of the time. Leadership-wise, I completely and wholeheartedly disagree with her, and I will continue to tell her that until the day she leaves."

The disagreement between Haley and Goldfinch moved into the public light earlier this year. According to a March 5 article in "The State" newspaper, Haley's political action committee, A Great Day in SC, launched a series of ads against Goldfinch and other legislators who had "irked" her ahead of this year's election.

Despite his public feud with the governor, Goldfinch said he expected to secure a return to Columbia this election year. "If she wants to recruit



Boyd

Goldfinch

somebody to run against me, which she did, and support him, which shed does, that's fine," he said. "But when I go back to Columbia in the winter of next year as the next senator for Senate District 34, I'll continue to fight for conservative reform, I'll continue to do what I think is right, and I'll continue to support her — regardless of her stabbing me in the back — because it's the right thing to do."



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Memorial Day events planned

By Jason Evans
Staff Reporter
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COUNTY — Each year on the last Monday in May, the nation pauses to remember and honor the men and women who died serving their country.

A number of events are planned around Pickens County.

At 9 a.m. next Monday, May 30, members of the American Legion Pickens Post 11 and the Knights of Columbus will hold a ceremony at Sunrise Cemetery in Pickens.

A flag will be raised during the 30-minute ceremony, said Gary Parsons with the American Legion Pickens Post 11.

Rep. Davey Hiott will speak. The Marine Corps League may also take part in the ceremony.

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emony. Parsons said a local motorcycle group has also taken part in recent years.

Later that day, Pickens Post 11 members will travel to Hillcrest Cemetery for another ceremony. That ceremony is set to begin around 11:45 a.m., Parsons said. A wreath will be placed and flags will be raised on both sides of the highway. Another flag will be raised in the veterans section of the cemetery.

The flag-raising is set to take place at noon, Parsons said.

In Easley, members of the American Legion Post 52 will place flags in Westview Cemetery this Friday.

Also on Friday, Post 52 will begin its Memorial Day Poppy Sale at the Wal-Mart in Easley. Poppies will be sold from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday through Monday. The Memorial Day Poppy Sale is Post 52's biggest fundraiser each year.

Aunt Sue's Country Corner will also present its third annual Memorial Day Fest on Monday, featuring bluegrass music from Band Kelley, Balsam Range and Larry Sparks.

Tickets are \$20. Barbecue and hot dogs will be available. Attendees are urged to bring a lawn chair.

For more information, con-

tact Aunt Sue's Country Corner at (864) 878-4366.

Clemson University will also honor fallen soldiers at a Memorial Day service at 4 p.m. Sunday at the Scroll of Honor Memorial.

The service will feature patriotic songs, a 21-gun salute and remarks by retired Lt. Col. Eric Turner. Turner, a chaplain and 1982 Clemson graduate, served tours of duty in Germany, Iraq and Afghanistan. He retired with 32 years of military service in the Army and National Guard.

"The men and women of our armed forces who gave their lives in defense of freedom traded their futures for our tomorrows," said Lance Young, chairman of the Clemson Corps. "Their service should be remembered and honored by all of us who enjoy the freedom that is the legacy of their sacrifice."

The Clemson Corps is coordinating the event at the Scroll of Honor Memorial on Williamson Road, directly across from Memorial Stadium. The public is invited. Parking will be available along the Avenue of Champions, immediately north of the stadium. Seating is limited, so people are encouraged to bring lawn chairs.

In addition to the local Memorial Day events, Pickens County Veterans Affairs Officer Martha Dorset said a banner commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War is

being displayed at the county administrative building in Pickens.

The banner can be seen as you come up the divided driveway of the administration building.

According to a proclamation issued by Governor Nikki Haley last year, the United States Vietnam War Commemoration "was established to thank and honor the veterans, including those held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, and their families for their service and sacrifice."

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Title: **Haley vetoes \$41M from budget**
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Haley vetoes \$41M from budget

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley struck \$41 million worth of spending from the Legislature's \$7.5 billion budget and thanked legislators Thursday for not attempting to borrow money for college construction.

That's partly why the veto total isn't higher, she said: "They actually did what we said: 'Use the money that's there. Don't go and borrow.'"

Last year, Haley's opposi-

tion helped defeat proposals to borrow primarily for projects at universities and technical colleges. She publicly warned legislators in January not to try again.

On Thursday, she applauded the more than \$100 million the budget sends to technical

colleges for one-time spending and \$30 million added to four-year colleges for recurring expenses. She called the lack of a college bond bill her "No. 1 win" this year.

But House Ways and Means Chairman Brian White said colleges, cut deeply amid the recession, needed far more to cover deferred maintenance and building needs. State borrowing is still needed unless lawmakers want colleges to continue passing on costs through increased tuition and fees, he said.

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"At some point, we're going to have to borrow to fix the institutions so they don't borrow on the backs of our kids," said White, R-Anderson.

Haley said the other reason she didn't veto more is because "hidden earmarks" made it impossible.

Legislators are grouping unspecified spending together so she can't strike single items with her line-item veto authority, she said.

"They roll things up to where we can't get to it," she said.

Haley's 51 budget vetoes, issued minutes before her midnight Wednesday deadline, include \$8.7 million of what she calls "old-fashioned pork," such as \$3 million for sports marketing and \$100,000 for a Richland County swimming pool.

Legislators will return to Columbia next week to consider overriding them.

She struck several earmarks for museums, including \$3 million toward a new Medal of Honor museum — currently on the USS Yorktown in Charleston Harbor — \$1 million on the Children's Museum of the Upstate, and \$350,000 for the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston. She also struck \$50,000 for the USS Laffey in

Charleston Harbor.

Those should be funded by "selling memberships, collecting admissions fees and soliciting philanthropic support," not "earmarking state funds to choose one site over another," Haley wrote in her veto message.

However, her pen did not touch \$4 million for the planned International African-American Museum in

Charleston.

"I think we're a state that's still healing. We're coming on the anniversary," Haley said, referencing the massacre of nine black parishioners at a historic church in Charleston. "I very much feel a responsibility to hold our state together and make sure we understand the significance of June 17 and understand we can only grow from that, so I thought that was important that that stay."

Fifteen of her vetoes strike mandates, not money.

She vetoed a budget clause calling for an evaluation of moving the Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum to Charleston.

Legislators opted for the study instead of spending anything to display the Confederate flag removed from Statehouse grounds and sent to the museum last summer

following the massacre at Emanuel AME Church.

House members, who balked at a proposed \$3.6 million price tag for the flag display and museum expansion, argued its current location in Columbia doesn't attract enough visitors and needs to be more self-sufficient.

But Haley argued the study is a "veiled attempt to justify" combining the Relic Room and the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley and is "nothing more than a legislative pet project."

Haley said when she worked with legislators in bringing down the Confederate flag, they talked about creating a "proper, respectful place for it."

"Never in any of those conversations did they talk about moving it to Charleston," she said.

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HALEY**

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\$50K cut from Greenwood Promise initiative

By ADAM BENSON

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A scholarship initiative designed to give every Greenwood County student a chance to go to college is facing a \$50,000 cut in state aid, after Republican Gov. Nikki Haley included it in a package of 47 vetoes made public Wednesday.

Established in October, Greenwood Promise has so far raised \$4.3 million from local donors with the idea of guar-

anteeing access to a two-year technical college education for students upon their graduation from a Greenwood high school.

The scholarship is set up as a 501(c)(3) foundation under the umbrella of the Greenwood Partnership Alliance.

In her veto, Haley credited Piedmont Technical College for becoming a "leader in dis-

tance learning and progressive matriculation," making the additional funds for the Greenwood program extraneous.

"I believe we should provide consistent and equitable support for students in the system," Haley wrote in her Wednesday veto message. "Piedmont Technical College has become a leader in distance learning and progressive

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matriculation without these funds, and will not need them to continue to succeed."

But local officials said Haley misread the Greenwood Promise mission.

"The kids have got to have funds to be able to get there and get those skills to begin with," state Sen. Floyd Nicholson, D-Greenwood, said on Thursday. "I hope we'll be able to override it. I think it's a great program that provides educational opportunities for kids in my district."

The award amount is place-based and uses a sliding scale of years of residence in Green-

wood County. Students who move into one of the county's three school district after their ninth-grade year are ineligible for funding.

Greenwood Promise launches with students starting with the Class of 2017.

Alliance CEO Heather Simons Jones said Greenwood Promise's self-contained funding mechanism means the loss of state assistance will not threaten its future.

"The deployment of the Promise was not dependent on the \$50,000, and since Oct. 22, we have raised \$4.3 million

locally, so certainly it's widely supported by Greenwood County's residents," she said.

Jones said she also found Haley's support of Piedmont Technical College promising. She certainly seems to support the promotion of enrollment in the technical college system and calls out PTC as a leader in workforce development."

"This Promise program is not being led as a Piedmont Technical College initiative, it is a countywide initiative that seeks to build the workforce pipeline. We feel that it being unique to Greenwood County certainly is an advantage to us," she said.

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Primary set for June 14

*Voters to choose
candidates for
Nov. election*

By MAX HRENDA

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Some contests will be determined, others will be unaffected and others will be decided during the South Carolina Statewide Primary Election June 14.

Democrats and Republicans alike will head to the polls to make their choices for a variety of local, state and federal positions.

In several cases, the decisions made by Georgetown County voters will all but decide several elections, barring successful write-in campaigns. Locally, the position of Probate Court Judge is the only such election.

Pawleys Island attorneys Teresa Bennani and Leigh Powers Boan are seeking the Republican nomination for the Probate Court judgeship, which will be vacated when sitting Judge Waldo Maring retires at the end of his term. The winner of the June 14 primary will not face opposition in the Nov. 8

general election.

Bennani, a private practice attorney, touted her experience working with estate and probate law. In addition to that experience, Bennani has served on the board of directors for several businesses and nonprofits — such as Smith Medical Clinic, Teach My People and the Pawleys Island Montessori schools — and was elected to a position on the Georgetown County School District Board of Education in 2008.

Powers Boan, an attorney for the McNair Law Firm, cited her experience working a variety of fields that often end up in Probate Court: medical, commercial transactions, foreclosures, personal injury, insurance, employment, real estate, fiduciary obligations and government. Like Bennani, Powers Boan has also served in leadership roles for local organizations such as the Georgetown County School of Arts

and Sciences, Georgetown County Literacy Council and the Georgetown Performing Dance Arts Foundation.

Though the Probate Court judgeship is the only local election that will be decided on June 14, the candidate field for the District 3 seat on the Georgetown County Council will be cut in half. Three candidates are vying for the Democratic party nomination for the seat: incumbent Council member Leona Myers-Miller, local businessman Everett Carolina Sr. and NAACP chapter President Morris Johnson.

The winner of the June 14 primary will move on to face independent challenger Eileen Sullivan Johnson in the general election.

In addition to the two local positions, voters will also determine who will represent them in the state

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Primary election set for June 14

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Legislature.

In the race for State Senate District 34, which includes the portion of Georgetown County east of the Waccamaw River, four Republicans are vying for the nomination: Reese Boyd, Joe Ford, state Rep. Stephen Goldfinch

and Dick Withington. With no additional challengers in the general election, one of the four will go on to represent District 34.

Boyd, a Myrtle Beach attorney who received a recent endorsement from Gov. Nikki Haley, has presented himself as “the conservative choice” for Senate; Ford, an

engineer and contractor, has campaigned as someone who will fight for governmental accountability; Goldfinch, who represents District 108 in the state House of Representatives, has touted his experience and vote history in the Legislature; and Withington, a Myrtle Beach businessman and U.S. Navy

veteran, is also citing his experience working with government to accomplish things.

In addition to his campaign, Withington made headlines on March 29 when he was arrested by the Horry County Police Department on a charge of inducement to file for, or withdraw from,

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candidacy for election. According to HCPD reports and warrants, Withington tried to solicit a bribe to drop out of the race for Horry County Council, which he was also pursuing along with the state Senate seat. His case has not appeared before a grand jury.

Along with Senate District 34, Georgetown County voters will also help determine who will represent them in House District 103, which includes most of Georgetown County west of the Waccamaw River, as well as parts of Williamsburg and Horry counties. Incumbent state Rep. Carl Anderson is facing opposition from political newcomer Dewon Huggins in the Democratic nomination for the seat. Again, the primary will, in all likelihood, decide the nomination, as no one from another party filed for the seat.

Because no candidate will face opposition from within the same political party, candidates for sheriff and treasurer will not appear on Tuesday's ballot. Additionally, the incumbent candidates for auditor, clerk of court, coroner and County Council districts 2, 4 and 5 will also not appear on the bal-

lot, as they are running unopposed. State Sen. Ronnie Sabb, D-32, is also running unopposed, while Republican candidate Lee Hewitt is the only candidate vying for Goldfinch's House seat.

Additionally, neither U.S. Rep. Tom Rice, R-District 7, nor U.S. Sen. Tim Scott are facing opposition in their respective primaries, though both have opponents for the Nov. 8 general election.

There are 34 polling locations that will be operating Tuesday. The probate court judgeship will be seen on all ballots, while the races for County Council District 3, state Senate District 34 and state House District 103 will appear on ballots within their respective districts.

In Georgetown, polling locations are located at: Georgetown County Fire/EMS Station 5, 303 Georgetown Highway; Georgetown County Family YMCA, 529 Browns Ferry Road; Browns Ferry Elementary School, 7292 Browns Ferry Road; Choppee Regional Resource, 8259 Choppee Road; Howard Adult Center's gym area, 500 S. Kaminski St.; Georgetown County Library, 405 Cleland St.; Beck Recreation Center, 2030 Church

St.; Georgetown Presbyterian Church, 558 Black River Road; Maryville Elementary School, 2125 Poplar St.; Kensington Elementary School, 86 Kensington Blvd.; St. Paul AME Church, 5348 Exodus Drive; the National Guard Armory, 3777 S. Fraser St.; Plantersville Community Center, 1458 Exodus Drive; Sampit Elementary School, 92 Woodland Ave.; Santee Community Center, 1484 Mt. Zion Ave.; McDonald Elementary School, 532 McDonald Road; and the office of Voter Registration and Elections, 303 N. Hazard St.

The Pawleys Island polling locations are: Pawleys Island Library, 41 St. Pauls Place; Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center, 83 Duncan Ave.; Pawleys Island Community Church, 10276 Ocean Highway; Lowcountry Preparatory School, 300 Blue Stem Drive; and Waccamaw High School's gymnasium, 2412 Kings River Road.

In Murrells Inlet, polling locations are: Murrells Inlet/Garden City Fire Headquarters, 3641 Highway 17 Business; New Greater Gordon AME Church, 4581 Old River Road; Murrells Inlet Fire Department, 4463 New

River Road; and Murrells Inlet Community Center, 4462 Murrells Inlet Road.

The Andrews precincts are: the National Guard Armory, 401 W. Main St.; Lambert Town Fire Station, 290 Windum Drive; and Potato Bed Ferry Community Center, 531 Big Dam Swamp Drive.

Lastly, the Hemingway voting precincts are located at: Carvers Bay High School, 13002 Choppee Road; Folly Grove Community Center, 2226 Folly Grove Road; Pee Dee Community Center, 1336 Cohen Drive; and Pleasant Hill Elementary School, 11957 Pleasant Hill Drive.

Voters should check their registration cards to verify their correct precinct. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters are required to bring a form of photo ID. Voters who use their voter registration cards as ID will be required to provide additional documentation, such as a current bank statement, utility bill or paycheck to verify their address.

For additional information, contact the Georgetown County office of Elections and Voter Registration at 843-545-3339 or email the office at vote@gtcounty.org.

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EDITORIAL

Better road funding needed in state

South Carolina lawmakers patted each other on the back following passage of S. 1258, a Senate road funding bill that legislators say will increase funding by more than \$4 billion in the next 10 years.

"Members of the House understand that the people of South Carolina expect their Legislature to pass a roads bill this year," House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, said in a news release.

"Although more effort must be made next session to find a long-term funding stream, this bill is a starting point that allows for adequate repair of deficient roads and bridges without raiding our state's General Fund," the release said. But it's also not entirely accurate to suggest S. 1258 won't potentially impact the general fund and the agencies that would be dependent on it.

S. 1258, for example, diverts \$84.2 million in S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles fee revenue to the State Highway Fund. The bill in its current form also creates a detour from the state's

school building fund, ferrying nearly \$61 million to the State Highway Fund.

The bill includes a variety of other funding detours designed to generate billions of dollars.

Rep. Gary Simrill, R-Rock Hill, who crafted the House companion bill, said the S.C. DMV and school building funds would be replenished with general fund appropriations.

"The DMV will not be short-changed as a result of this," Simrill said, noting the school building fund will be similarly unaffected.

That appears to be the case in this year's budget, but if there's one certainty to the budgeting process, it's that the general fund is a floating target and isn't immune to future funding cuts or transfers.

The Great Recession of 2008 made it painfully obvious that no public service is immune from budget cuts during times of economic downturn. Even in good times, there's no guarantee funding will remain in place over

the long term.

State lawmakers assert the fund transfers are integral components to highway legislation because it gives government more flexibility in bonding road projects. Simrill said it's easier to leverage bonds against guaranteed revenue sources, such as DMV fees, than it is against general fund revenue.

"It's a revenue bond and not a general obligation bond," he said.

Simrill said that's significant because revenue bonds can be issued more quickly and in smaller amounts than general obligation bonds, thereby accelerating road projects by borrowing in smaller, more frequent increments.

The Rock Hill lawmaker likened the process to the home mortgage lending process. It would be like paying for a house in phases instead of all at once, like with a conventional mortgage, he said.

That is a creative way of looking at it. And it's hard to deny the logic behind securing more frequent, short-term loans.

Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken, tells us S. 1258 will generate \$32 mil-

lion for road resurfacing projects in Aiken County, \$14 million for Edgefield County and \$15 million for Barnwell County.

Taylor said the bill would result in an additional \$52 million to resurface I-20 from Exit 5 to the Georgia state line. If funding comes to fruition, it's hard to reject that level of support.

That, however, still doesn't fully allay our concerns about shifting DMV and school building revenues to roads and replacing fee revenue with general fund revenue. General fund revenues almost always fluctuate; seldom are they etched in stone.

With travel reaching all-time highs, South Carolina needs a better, more dependable way to fund road repair and construction.

While the current plan likely headed to Gov. Nikki Haley's desk may generate short-term revenue, it's sustainability over the long-term still remains doubtful.

(From The Aiken Standard)